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Montana Rep is booking fall Outreach Tour

The Montana Repertory Theatre is taking bookings for its fall Educational Outreach Tour, which starts Sept. 9 and runs through the middle of November.

This year's show is "Of Mice and Men and Rock 'n Roll (A Road Trip through the Literary Landscapes of John Steinbeck)," a 50-minute comedy by Jay Kettering. The play finds a young John Steinbeck, on his way to becoming a great writer, sitting in the driver's seat next to his faithful dog Charley. He has picked up a teenage hitchhiker with the heart and soul of a rock 'n roller, and together they travel across America, encountering numerous characters from Steinbeck's writings.

This year's show costs \$550 and includes an accompanying workshop.

For details on the tour and Montana Repertory Theatre, visit www.montana-rep.org, or contact Teresa Waldorf, Educational Outreach coordinator, at 406-243-2854 or teresa.waldorf@umontana.edu.

ARTS EDUCATION

Helena freshman wins state Poetry Out Loud contest

Taylor Blossom, a freshman at Capital High School in Helena, won the eighth annual Montana Poetry Out Loud State Finals, a program of the Montana Arts Council. The competition, held March 9 in Helena, recognizes one high school competitor to represent Montana in the National Poetry Out Loud competition, presented by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation. Blossom, who took top honors with his recitation of "Kubla Khan" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, will compete in Washington, D.C., April 29-30.

"I really didn't expect to win," he told the *Independent Record*, adding, "I like speaking in public and poetry gives you the chance to do that."

Blossom receives a \$200 cash award and an all-expenses-paid trip with a chaperone to the national finals, where he will compete for a \$20,000 college scholarship. Blossom's school also receives \$500 to purchase poetry books for its library.

The Montana Arts Council also recognizes the importance of teacher involvement and provides for the winner's teacher to travel to Washington, D.C.

Runner-up in the Montana State competition is Stella Shannon, a junior at Hellgate High School in Missoula. She won \$100, and her high school receives \$200 towards the purchase of poetry books for the school's library.

Savannah Smith, a freshman at Helena High School in Helena, took third place.

Participating students competed at the classroom and school level. School winners went on to regional competitions.

The 2013 Montana finals hosted 20 students from communities across the state. Eight students were recognized as finalists in the state competition: Kim Biere and Cortney Walsh, Butte High; Taylor Blossom, Capital High; Dan Cashell and Savannah Smith, Helena High; and Dan Cook, Austin Graef and Stella Shannon, Hellgate High.



Taylor Blossom, left, took top honors at the Montana Poetry Out Loud finals; Stella Shannon (center) was runner-up; and Savannah Smith (right) took third place.

Montana's Poetry Out Loud coordinator, Margaret Belisle, said of the program: "Educators recognize the need to cultivate the art of recitation. Since 2006, seven Montana state winners have attended the national finals in Washington, DC, and thousands of students across Montana have experienced the power of recitation through classroom, school, regional and state competition.

"Every year more teachers and schools realize the potential of this program as they illustrate a desire to challenge students to memorize and perform the spoken word that is not just educational but critical in a world of texting and sound bites.

"This year nearly 4,000 Montana students participated in Poetry Out Loud. This level of participation demonstrates the positive effect the arts have on the education of our young people. Every participating student developed their abilities to read and interpret, memorize works of literature and speak to large groups

of people. The skills the arts provide to our children will serve them throughout their lives."

About the judges

Judges for the Montana Poetry Out Loud competition included:

Anne Bauer, who teaches at Carroll College; her chapbook, *Fine Absence*, won the Pavement Saw Press's Chapbook Award in 2011.

Loren Graham, a teacher at Carroll College and recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship; he has three books of poetry published.

Lowell Jaeger teaches creative writing at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell. He is the author of four collections of poems. In 2009, he received the Montana Governor's Humanities Award for his work in promoting civic discourse.

Melissa Kwasny, a poet and teacher for Lesley University's graduate program, has written four books of poetry and two novels. She also has a collection of essays just out titled *Earth Recitals: Essays on Image and Vision*.

Mark Gibbons, the Poetry Out Loud performance consultant, has published six books of poetry. Gibbons works for the Missoula Writing Collaborative, is an artist-in-residence with the Montana Arts Council, and has been involved with Poetry Out Loud since its inception.

About Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry – recitation and performance. The program invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage. For more information, visit www.poetryoutloud.org.



Semi-finalists in the Poetry Out Loud competition were (left to right): first row: Taylor Blossom, Capital High, Helena; Stella Shannon, Hellgate High, Missoula; Kali Taylor, and Kim Biere, Butte High. Second row: Cortney Walsh, Butte High; Benjamin Burdick, Billings Senior High; Kelsey McFeely, Whitefish High; Austin Graef, Hellgate High; Kendra Anderson, Billings Senior High; Jocelyn Gates, Capital High; and Savannah Smith, Helena High. Third row: Karis Bedey, Hamilton High; Alex Kostelnik and Juliet Hundahl, Choteau High; Dan Cook, Hellgate High; Jessica Sheldahl, Helena High; and Rachel Devine, Corvallis High. Back row: Kenny Painter, Billings Senior High; Jude MacDonald, Choteau High; and Dan Cashell, Helena High.

Photos by Robyn Duff

Studio offers scholarship opportunity for Gallatin County students

Cobalt Moose Art Studios of Bozeman is offering a scholarship opportunity for Gallatin County High School students in grades 9-12 in the form of a juried competition.

This call is for artists working in traditional two-dimensional media only; sculpture, fiber arts, photography, and digital arts fall outside these parameters. Application deadline is June 30.

Five finalists will be selected by jury to participate in the third annual Art on the Lawn, Aug. 17 on the studio grounds in

Bozeman, and the winner will be selected by nationally known artist Aaron Schuerr of Livingston.

In addition, finalists will participate in a complementary framing session in preparation for the event, and will receive professional mentorship, including instruction on presentation of artwork.

The scholarship will be funded by 50 percent of the sales from the silent auction during the event. Studio co-owner Terry Hall estimates, based on previous sales totals and

an increase in artist participation, that the scholarship will range between \$1,500 and \$3,000.

Hall says the studio hopes to open the scholarship to students from a wider geographical area next year. "We wanted to stick closer to home to sort of break ground. Our hope is that this will turn into a great opportunity for students who wish to pursue a career in fine art."

Visit www.cobaltmoose.com and click on the Scholarship 2013 link for more details.